

Message Text

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63

ACTION EUR-12

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USCINCEUR GER

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: MPOL, DA

SUBJ: DANISH ATTITUDES TOWARDS DEFENSE

SUMMARY: RECENT GALLUP POLL IN DENMARK SHOWS INCREASED SUPPORT FOR
DEFENSE. END SUMMARY

1. ALL LEADING NEWSPAPERS IN DENMARK LAST WEEK REPORTED THE RESULTS
OF AN OPINION SURVEY BY THE GALLUP INSTITUTE THAT SHOWS A MODEST
INCREASE IN THE SUPPORT FOR THE DEFENSE COMPARED TO A SIMILAR SURVEY
CONDUCTED IN 1969.

2. TO THE QUESTION, "DO YOU THINK THE DANISH DEFENSE FORCES SHOULD
BE INCREASED, REMAIN AT PRESENT STRENGTH, OR SHOULD BE REDUCED?",
THE FOLLOWING PERCENTAGES WERE OBTAINED IN 1969 AND TODAY:

1969 PERCENT TODAY PERCENT

INCREASED 3 6

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REMAIN THE SAME 41 45

| | | |
|------------|-----|-----|
| REDUCED | 39 | 30 |
| DON'T KNOW | 17 | 19 |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 |

THE GALLOP POLL LUMPS "INCREASED" AND "REMAINS THE SAME" TOGETHER AND LABELS THEM SUPPORTERS OF DEFENSE. THE "REDUCED" IT CALLS OPPOSERS OF DEFENSE. DIVIDING THE "DON'T KNOW" IN THE SAME PROPORTION, THE POLL DEDUCES THAT THE FOLLOWING IS THE RATION OF SUPPORTERS AND OPPOSERS OF THE DEFENSE IN 1969 AND TODAY:

| | 1969 PERCENT | TODAY PERCENT |
|--|--------------|---------------|
|--|--------------|---------------|

| | | |
|-----------------|-----|-----|
| SUPPORT DEFENSE | 53 | 63 |
| OPPOSE DEFENSE | 47 | 37 |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 |

3. THE SAME POLL SHOWS A HARDENING OF THE POSITION OF THOSE WHO OPPOSE DEFENSE. THOSE RESPONDENTS WHO FAVORED A REDUCTION OF THE DEFENSE WERE ASKED, "IF YOU COULD NOW VOTE FOR A REDUCTION IN THE DEFENSE, WOULD YOU VOTE FOR A REDUCTION OF 10 PERCENT, 25 PERCENT, OR 50 PERCENT. THE RESULTS WERE AS FOLLOWS:

| | 1969 PERCENT | 1976 PERCENT |
|--|--------------|--------------|
|--|--------------|--------------|

| | | |
|------------|-----|-----|
| 10 PERCENT | 15 | 8 |
| 25 PERCENT | 26 | 23 |
| 50 PERCENT | 45 | 56 |
| DON'T KNOW | 14 | 14 |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 |

4. GALLUP ALSO POSED THE FOLLOWING QUESTION TO THE SAMPLE GROUP, "DO YOU THINK THE DANISH DEFENSE WORKS EFFECTIVELY OR NOT EFFECTIVELY?" RESPONSES FROM THE SAMPLING WERE AS FOLLOWS:

| | 1969 PERCENT | 1976 PERCENT |
|--|--------------|--------------|
|--|--------------|--------------|

| | | |
|---------------|----|----|
| EFFECTIVE | 31 | 34 |
| NOT EFFECTIVE | 43 | 31 |
| DON'T KNOW | 26 | 35 |

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| | | |
|-------|-----|-----|
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 |
|-------|-----|-----|

5. COMMENT: (A) ALTHOUGH ALL LEADING DANISH NEWSPAPERS ARE INTERPRETING THE POLL RESULTS ACCORDING TO EACH ONE'S POLITICAL SWAY, THE SURVEY DOES SEEM TO DETECT SOME MOVEMENT IN DANISH PUBLIC OPINION TOWARDS SUPPORT OF THE DANISH DEFENSE. CAUSES OF THE MOVEMENT TOWARD SUPPORT OF THE DEFENSE ARE THOUGHT TO STEM FROM THE RECENT AGGRESSIVE ACTIONS OF WARSAW PACT

NAVAL UNITS IN THE BALTIC AND FROM CRITICISMS BY SENIOR NATO OFFICIALS OF PROPOSED DANISH DEFENSE CUTS. (B) WHETHER THIS DEVELOPMENT WILL BE REFLECTED IN THE NEGOTIATION FOR A NEW DEFENSE AGREEMENT REMAINS TO BE SEEN. THE GOVERNMENT IS DETERMINED TO REDUCE TOTAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES BY THE EQUIVALENT OF \$250 MILLION. A KEY PARLIAMENTARIAN TOLD US THAT NEARLY ALL MINISTERIES WILL BE AFFECTED. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES HE THOUGHT THE DEFENSE MINISTRY MAY ALSO HAVE TO ACCEPT A SYMBOLIC REDUCTION. WE CONTINUED TO ARGUE THAT DANISH DEFENSE EXPENDITURES ARE ALREADY LOW AND THEREFORE EVEN A SYMBOLIC CUT SHOULD BE AVOIDED.

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